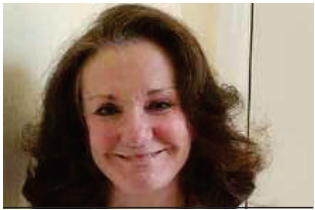


# Big garden, small space



**Margo Roten**  
*Master Gardener*

**Question:** I have recently moved to this area and am currently in an apartment with a small patio, surrounded on three sides with dirt and fencing. I miss not only my garden and my fruit trees but I miss gardening. Any tips for me?

**Answer:** Yes, I do. As someone who has been transplanted a few times, I decided (after a difficult move) that my favorite garden will be wherever I am.

Throw yourself into creating your best garden yet, basing your thinking on the garden you have now instead of the garden you miss. You know, as a gardener, once you get started you can't stop.

Some space savers for your garden are: espaliering, vertical gardening, roof gardening, container gardening, hanging pots, hanging planter bags and plant stands that hold multiple plants.

Espaliering is a method of decorative pruning that was developed over 400 years ago in France. Although this was developed to be decorative, it is also a great space saver. Styles of espalier range from intricate designs to the very simple. Espaliered trees are pruned, not to be round and full, but to run length-wise and upright along a fence, trellis or wall. You can buy these trees already started in espalier or do it yourself.

This method takes time but it will allow you to fit two- to-three fruit trees where you may have thought none were possible. If you choose this method, make sure that you choose trees on dwarfing rootstock to control the height.

Use the surfaces you have. Is there a roof on a shed? Succulents do well grown this way but be sure to protect the roof with a water proof barrier. Succulents work well on a roof because they don't require a lot of water and it gives you space



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**Espaliered trees are pruned to run length-wise and upright along a fence, trellis or wall.**

you didn't even know you had.

Since your horizontal area is limited, use fences and walls in a vertical way. Home gutters can be made into a vertical wall planter. Attach several gutters, one under the other and hang them up. I have seen this done in a shady area with all ferns. It was beautiful. Coleus would also work well in this situation and bring lots of color to a shady, dark area.

Planting in decorative pots will allow you to take your plants with you when you move. There are so many sizes and shapes available, even half-pots. Half-pots can be hung on the fence but take half of the space of a round pot. Whatever size you decide on will look wonderful in a large grouping. If you do plant in containers, be sure to water and fertilize regularly.

For the small dirt areas around your patio, if you have a small pet, consider planting a small amount of grass. You don't have to plant this area, you could put in pots or boxes.

Plant hangers will hold potted plants off the ground. There are also planting bags that hang up for vegetables and strawberry pots for luscious strawberries! Even an old ladder, placed in a corner with plants on every step will show off many plants in a small space.

Have fun with this! There are so many choices. And don't forget a cozy chair where you can sit, sip your tea and enjoy your new best-ever garden.

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*Do you have a gardening question? Contact the Douglas County Master Gardeners*



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**Window planters are another way to utilize space not usually considered while gardening.**

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